

June 30, 2000

Reference: Solicitation No. 52-SAAA-9-00010

1. Amendment No. 13
2. Revised Proposal Conference Questions and Answers

Dear COMMITTS Offerors:

Attached for your information are Questions and Answers provided at the COMMITTS Revised Proposal Conference held on June 29, 2000. I appreciated the feedback provided to me by the attendees, and the honest dialogue. In response to that feedback, the substantive adjustments to the solicitation discussed at the conference will be issued on Monday, July 1, 2000, as Amendment No. 14. The amendment will include clarified instructions regarding technical proposal submissions, price proposal requirements, and administrative updates to the clauses included in the solicitation.

In addition, this notice serves as Amendment No. 13 to the solicitation. The following amendment to the solicitation is hereby made:

Provision L. 5 – Proposal Format and Submission Instructions

The submission of revised proposals is hereby extended to July 14, 2000, at 4:00 p.m. local time.

If you have questions or require additional clarification, please submit your questions in writing to e-mail address commits.reeval@doc.gov. Again, please be sure to check the COMMITTS web site on Monday, July 1, 2000, for issuance of Amendment No. 14.

Thank you, and enjoy the holiday weekend.

Sincerely,

Tiffany T. Hixson
Contracting Officer
COMMITTS Re-Evaluation Team

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE
COMMITTS REVISED PROPOSAL CONFERENCE
JUNE 29, 2000, AT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

- 1. Given the Department's focus on "quality", it is incomprehensible the degree of "lack of quality" you have exhibited through the solicitation process.**

Answer: The Department recognizes the quality issues that have affected the COMMITTS solicitation process during the past 18 months, and has taken steps to ensure that integrity and adequate documentation is maintained throughout the remaining re-evaluation process. These steps include:

1. Restructuring of Contracting and Technical Evaluation Staff

The contracting and technical evaluation team for the COMMITTS re-evaluation process has been restructured and is now an independent unit that reports directly to the Source Selection Authority.

2. Risk Management

To ensure that adequate documentation and acquisition review methodologies are utilized, the Office of Acquisition Management's Risk Management Division will independently review COMMITTS re-evaluation acquisition documentation. This review process will focus on both technical and price documentation to ensure that the solicitation evaluation criteria were properly utilized and that Federal Acquisition Regulations were adhered to during the evaluation process.

3. Management Oversight

The Source Selection Authority and COMMITTS Re-Evaluation Team meet at least weekly with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration to provide status updates regarding the timeliness of the re-evaluation process and to discuss general issues of concern raised by COMMITTS offerors.

Moreover, the Source Selection Authority has recused himself from duties as the Head of the Contracting Activity to ensure that any agency level protests received, or matters that may require decisions by the Head of the Contracting Activity, are independently reviewed and resolved.

2. **Will claims of SEI CMM compliance and actual certification be verified? Any independent evaluators checking on this? We do this and find many companies lack in many key process areas and become non-compliant.**

Answer: Yes, independent verifications of these claims will be conducted.

3. **Our prime contractor PM is overseas on key project and very difficult to have in country in one week. Can we replace his services with another candidate?**

Answer: Yes. Proposed COMMITTS Program Managers may be substituted in revised proposals.

4. **Reference page 7: Past Performance. Lists also management tasks, metrics - where do these go?**

Answer: Attachment J-8: Oral Past Performance Reference List, will be modified to allow offerors to identify the metrics and management tools utilized. In addition, in the technical narrative, metrics and management tools should be discussed. This discussion will provide the technical evaluation team will insight into your use of these contract management tools.

5. **What weighting will be placed on price factor? Are we limited these rates on the update?**

Answer: As reference in Provision M.3.b of Amendment No. 12, non-price factors are significantly more important than the price (FAR 15.304.(e)).

6. **What about subs? Is it too late to add any new ones to replace who may be otherwise involved?**

Answer: New subcontractors can be identified in Attachment J-6: Offeror Composition Form.

7. **On 22p. Technical, you called it a “narrative.” Can we use some of the powerpoint slides from the orals?**

Answer: Yes. Power Point slides originally submitted with your offer can be utilized. Offerors should be mindful of the page limitation when including slides.

8. **Will we be required to submit new SF-33s?**

Answer: No. Resubmission of SF-33's is not required.

9. **Can we change team members?**

Answer: Reference Answer #6 above.

10. Will 8(a) credit be offered to customers under COMMITS?

Answer: No, 8(a) will not be offered. COMMITS customers can receive small, small disadvantage, and women-owned small business credit.

11. Are you still requesting GSA Schedule Pricing? There are references to GSA Schedule in the RFP that were not removed. Please clarify.

Answer: No, Amendment No. 14 will clarify pricing submission requirements.

12. Are you evaluating the credentials of the Subcontractors/Team members. If so, what?

Answer: Yes, a high level review of the subcontractor's type of service provided will be conducted. However, no review, rating, or analysis of the subcontractor's past performance record will be conducted. Amendment No. 14 will clarify this review standard.

13. Would having a large business on our team be counted against our score?

Answer: Yes. Those firms offering subcontractors that are large business cannot receive the maximum score possible under Non-Price Factor 2. (Reference Provision M.3.a, Amendment No. 12.)

14. The President recently issued an Executive Order regarding women-owned businesses. Will the provisions of that E.O. be implemented during the reeval of COMMITS offerors?

Answer: No. Provisions of the Executive Order are implemented at a department level, and not at an individual contract level.

15. If you originally bid only one lot (e.g., O&M), can you now bid more than one?

Answer: No.

16. Does Section J of revised proposal supercede what was submitted in early June re: mapping of labor categories?

Answer: Yes. Moreover, Amendment No. 14 will clarify pricing response requirements.

17. How many contracts are going to be awarded? Are there any contracts reserved for 8(a), SB, WB, etc.?

Answer: There is no set number of contract awards. Please reference Provision M.1 of Amendment No. 12 for additional information.

18. What does Government expect in 20 pages of description that replaces oral slides?

Answer: The government will provide additional guidance regarding the technical narrative portion of the revised proposal in Amendment No. 14 to the solicitation.

19. What is the probability of awarding a contract to a company that was not selected originally?

Answer: The government can not speculate on the probability of new awards. Each offeror may update and revise their proposal against the stated evaluation factors thereby impacting their opportunity for contract award.

20. Do you have to be a US firm?

Answer: Yes.

21. Page 7, Tab D: Information shall be placed in the following order: "Executive Summary" is not listed. Where should it go?

Answer: The Executive Summary should be first in Tab D. Reference Provision L.8, Volume 1, Tab D, and Provision L.8, Volume 1, Tab D of Amendment No. 12.

22. Attachment J-8 still refers to orals. Can you provide guidance on number of references, etc. you want on J-8?

Answer: Thank you for bringing our attention to the editorial oversight. We will revise this section to eliminate the reference to oral presentations.

Offerors should include up to 5 references in Attachment J.8.

23. If Section K does not need to be revised, should we still include Tab B in our resubmittal?

Answer: Tab B is not required in the revised proposal submission.

24. Comment: We believe time period for due date is acceptable given all contractors have the same time constraint.

Answer: We appreciate your support, however, in an effort to respond to offeror concerns regarding the response time, in Amendment No. 13 the proposal due date and time has been extended to Friday, July 14, 2000, at 4:00 p.m. local time.

25. Since Commerce is not going to have orals...will Commerce have a BAFO?

Answer: It is not our intent to conduct discussions or require best and final offers. Reference Provision M.1 of Amendment No. 12.

- 26. Since there are not set number of awards to be made - Will Best and Final negotiations be held?**

Answer: Reference #27 above.

- 27. Amendment 12, page 7. Tab D instructions permit figures and/or matrices in the Executive Summary to be reduced to 8 point. May the 20 pages of technical information also display information in figures and/or matrices be 8 point?**

Answer: Yes.

- 28. The July 7 date is not realistic. Can you extend it by two weeks?**

Answer: Amendment No. 13 has extended the due date and time for proposals to July 14, 2000, at 4:00 p.m. local time. Reference #24 above.

- 29. What is the current legal status of the awarded contracts?**

Answer: Performance under the current contracts has been enjoined until the re-evaluation process is completed.

- 30. Is the revised proposal considered "Final Proposal Revisions" as defined by FAR? Would the Government consider clarifying issue #2 in Amendment #13?**

Answer: Your submission will be considered as a "proposal revision" as defined in FAR Subpart 15.001, Definitions.

- 31. How many awards do you expect to make?**

Answer: Reference Question No. 17 above.

- 32. Do you really believe CMM certified company means they do a good job?**

Answer: Yes, the Department believes CMM certifications demonstrate a firm's commitment to quality.

- 33. Will there be any T&M or fixed rate tasks issued under COMMITS?**

Answer: The solicitation allows for all types of task order awards.

- 34. Given the majority of awards have been FFP on tasks to date, how will price be evaluated?**

Answer: The pricing evaluation scheme will be revised and issued through Amendment No. 14 on July 1, 2000.

- 35. Comment: We need an extension of at least seven (7) days to your proposed re-eval schedule!!**

Answer: Amendment No. 13 has extended the due date and time for proposals to July 14, 2000, at 4:00 p.m. local time. Reference #24 above.

- 36. Can we get a copy of the briefing package?**

Answer: Yes. The briefing package will be made available with the issuance of Amendment No. 14 on July 1, 2000.

- 37. Are the awards and other past performance criteria of the evaluation tied only to the prime or does it include the past performance of subcontractors?**

Answer: Yes, the evaluation criteria for awards and other past performance is evaluated on the prime contractor only.

- 38. During the last evaluation process, companies were ranked using a scale from A, B to C and team composition was "pass/fail". Will the ranking process be the same during this re-eval?**

Answer: All evaluation factors, with the exception of price, will be rated using an A through F scale.

- 39. Can you propose in a different business category - that is if you bid in one category on the original submission, can you switch to another (i.e., SB to SDB to 8(a) to WOB)?**

Answer: No.

- 40. Still requiring separate proposal for each functional area?**

Answer: Yes, separate proposals for each functional area offered are required.

- 41. Are the representations in Section K still effective/in effect?**

Answer: Yes.

- 42. Will the government pay for the cost to offerors for submitting revised proposals?**

Answer: No.